

Chair Martin and Esteemed City Council Members,

Thank you for allowing me to weigh in on the amendment to the Budget, allocating funds for 7 staff positions in the Office of Strategic Development. I am in favor of this amendment.

Was it just last fall when it seemed that we were all on the same page, agreeing that, indeed, Honolulu was in the midst of an affordable housing crisis? The Mayor came out with a plan, the City Council agreed, FACE held a housing summit with over 200 attendees from government sector, private developer sector and private concerned citizens. I personally was filled with hope that we would all move forward, together, to attack this crisis and find solutions.

As you know, Honolulu is not unique in the nation for facing a housing crisis. But wouldn't it be nice if Honolulu were unique in the nation in finding affordable housing solutions.

What does it take to do this? It takes

- 1) Political will
- 2) Willingness to work together with all the stake holders – the Administration, the legislature, the Mayor and the Governor as well as with the developers.
- 3) And an open heart to doing the right thing

Part of the hope that I felt last fall came from the City Council's move to allocate \$32 million to affordable housing – and then the City Council allocated another \$32 million for FY16. Thank you very much. However, it seems to me essential to also budget funds for staffing to oversee the wise and best spending of those monies.

The Office of Strategic Development with only 2 staff has proposed a transitional housing shelter for Sand Island, a small transitional housing complex in Waianae and the River Street Affordable Senior Housing Development just in the first 6 months of its existence. I can only imagine what it could accomplish with the requested 7 staff for the long term. They can research sites to develop, research existing buildings and land parcels for purchase, they can write RFPs, they can plan and implement both short term and long term projects.

If the council appropriates these funds and the Mayor's staff does not perform as expected, then shame on the Mayor. But if the Council does not even budget for these positions, then shame on the City Council.

Please vote in favor of this amendment to the FY16 budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Graham

RECEIVED
CITY CLERK
C & C OF HONOLULU
2015 JUN -2 PM 2:51